

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 615

By Casada

A RESOLUTION recognizing Beech Hill Farm, a Tennessee Pioneer Farm and Tennessee Century Farm.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should honor and recognize those exceptional farming families who, through their dedication to the ancient and esteemed traditions of agriculture, have made significant contributions to their respective communities and to this State; and

WHEREAS, the Ogilvie and Battle families of Williamson County certainly rank among those estimable Tennessee farming families; Beech Hill Farm, owned and operated by the family since a time before the founding of the State of Tennessee, has been designated a Tennessee Pioneer Farm and Tennessee Century Farm in recognition of its long and illustrious history; and

WHEREAS, designation as a Tennessee Pioneer Farm is reserved for those farms which were founded before or during 1796, when Tennessee gained statehood; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Century Farms Program recognizes those families who have owned and farmed the same land for over a century, and also documents and interprets the State's history and culture of farming; and

WHEREAS, William and Mary Harris Ogilvie moved from North Carolina to a homestead in the new State of Tennessee; in 1796, they chose property near a spring that still supplies the farm with fresh water, and William built a log house; and

WHEREAS, as needs changed during the antebellum period and later years, additions were made to the Ogilvie home; however, this dwelling continues to serve as the main farm house; and

WHEREAS, William Ogilvie gave and sold many parts of his landholdings to his sons; in his 1813 will, he gave to his son, Richard, 315 acres including the house, cabins, and farm buildings; when Richard died in 1822, he willed the farm to his wife, Cynthia, and youngest son, James Smith Ogilvie; and

WHEREAS, James Smith Ogilvie married Rachel Webb and they raised six children on the farm; in 1897, James died and passed the plantation to his sons, Samuel Jason Ogilvie and James Smith Ogilvie II, who purchased their sisters' shares; later on, the brothers divided the land, with Samuel receiving the portion with the buildings and 150 acres and James receiving 165 acres, on which he built a new house for his family; and

WHEREAS, Samuel Jason Ogilvie died at the age of thirty-six, leaving three young children for his wife, Anna Rucker Ogilvie, to raise alone; with the help of the African-American families living on the property, she was able to save the farm for her children, James D. Rachel, and Samuel; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, James served in Europe as a U.S. Marine; after he returned from the war, he became responsible for the farm's operations; and

WHEREAS, not long after James D. Ogilvie's return, his siblings, Rachel and Samuel, left the farm, and he and his wife, Bettye Maxwell, bought their interest in the farm; here they raised their children, Samuel Rucker and Elizabeth Maxwell; and

WHEREAS, James and Bettye Ogilvie operated the farm for the next three decades, and they named it "Beech Hill" because of the many beech trees growing on the acreage; and

WHEREAS, Samuel R. Ogilvie and Elizabeth Ogilvie Battle, the great-great-great-grandchildren of the founders, received the farm's 150 acres in 1964; in 1992, Elizabeth and her husband, noted journalist William Robert (Bob) Battle, became the sole owners and enjoyed living in her family's home; and

WHEREAS, since Mr. Battle's passing in 2012, Elizabeth Ogilvie Battle has continued to live in the historic home, and her son, William Robert Battle, III, and his family also live on the

farm; Elizabeth and Bob's daughter, Valerie Kiengle, and her brother will be the next generation of owners of Beech Hill Farm; and

WHEREAS, Beech Hill Farm, due to the presence of the log house begun by William Ogilvie in the late eighteenth century, 1830 slave quarters, and 1850 stone springhouse, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, the success of the State, the strength of its communities, and the overall vitality of our society depend, in great measure, on the dedication of people such as the members of the Ogilvie and Battle families, who have demonstrated a deep respect for tradition and hard work and a love for the land; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate owner Mrs. Elizabeth Ogilvie Battle, whose Beech Hill Farm has been designated a Tennessee Pioneer Farm, and Tennessee Century Farm, commend Mrs. Battle and her family for their dedication to agriculture, and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.